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**THE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION**  
*A Brief Summary of Economic Conditions*

ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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### SOME PRICES HIGHER—MORE PEOPLE ON FARMS

Events affecting agriculture have moved swiftly during the past month. The abandonment of the gold standard by this country, the depreciation of the dollar in foreign exchange, the bursting forth of the inflation sentiment into legislative action, the coincident rise in stocks and in many basic commodity prices, all present a picture of forces in motion whose ultimate effects may be far-reaching.

So far, the effect has been good for farmers. Wheat and other grains, hides, butter, and cotton prices have advanced 10 to 40 per cent.

In the case of wheat, the so-called inflation buying has been accompanied by bullish developments in the actual crop situation in this country. The report issued last month showed winter wheat in the poorest condition ever recorded, drought still widespread, winter-killing heavy in the Northwest, nearly a third of the acreage likely to be abandoned, and probability of the smallest crop in 29 years. Assuming an average spring wheat crop, the indications suggest that we will not raise enough wheat this year to meet domestic requirements and consequently that the surplus carried over will be further reduced.

The improvement in prices, as would be expected, occurs selectively, not only between enterprises but within given lines of production. Livestock has not yet felt the influence of rising prices as have the important cash crops which are sensitive to world markets. Yet butter, one of the principal livestock products, advanced about one-third at New York. This marked rise in butter occurred in the face of a milk situation so serious that it has led to "strikes" and disturbances in Wisconsin and New York and even to the fixing of milk prices by legislation.

Spring work is going forward everywhere, though bad weather has delayed grain and cotton preparations in some areas. The movement of fruits and vegetables has now become quite heavy, averaging recently about 2,500 cars a day. This is not quite up to last year, however.

Farm wages this spring average the lowest in 33 years. The average wage paid to hired men last month over the country as a whole was \$1.05 a day without board or \$22.98 a month without board. The farm wage index of 72 contrasts with an industrial wage index of 164 (pre-war considered as 100).

Our farm population (estimated at 32,242,000) is now the largest in history, according to the estimates compiled last month. The gain last year was a million persons. The great migration away from farms which went on from 1920 to 1930 has slackened. The movement from town to farm also has slowed up somewhat.

### FARM POPULATION REACHES NEW ALL-TIME PEAK

The farm population was 32,242,000 on January 1, 1933, compared with 31,241,000 on January 1, 1932, a net gain of 1,001,000 persons according to the annual estimate made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Not only is the 1933 figure the largest ever recorded for the farm population (the previous high figure being the 1910 estimate of 32,076,960 made by the Bureau of the Census), but the gain during 1932 is by far the largest single-year increase reported since 1920, the earliest year covered by these annual estimates.

For the period 1920 to 1929, the number of persons living on farms declined at an average rate of 145,000 per year. Only beginning with 1930 have any significant gains occurred. Yet in the 3-year period from January 1, 1930, to January 1, 1933, the farm population rose from 30,169,000 (the low point for at least the two preceding decades) to its present all-time peak.

### THE BACK-TO-THE-FARM MOVEMENT DURING 1932

The bureau estimates that 1,544,000 persons came to farms from cities, towns, and villages during 1932 compared with 1,683,000 a year ago. This decrease runs counter to the widely expressed conviction that the back-to-the-farm movement in 1932 would exceed that of 1931. The reduction in number of persons going to farms seems to be the result of several factors. Thus, among the city unemployed having possible havens of refuge on farms of parents, other relatives, or friends, a majority seem to have taken advantage of these opportunities already—at least this is the impression one gets from side remarks on a good many farm reports. Unless new great waves of unemployment occur in industries other than agriculture, this movement seems to have passed the peak.

Secondly, the opportunities for destitute urbanites to secure unoccupied habitable buildings in farming communities are becoming very much restricted throughout practically the entire United States. A common statement on this year's schedules returned by farmers is to the effect that substantially all formerly abandoned farmsteads, shacks, and cabins that will furnish any shelter at all are now filled, sometimes with two or more families of destitute unemployed per building.

A third factor in this slowing up of the farmward movement is due to the attempts of many cities and towns to provide plots of ground for subsistence gardening so located that the unemployed will not have to move their places of residence in order to produce part of their food needs. Where these people can secure seeds, fertilizers, and equipment in addition to the ground required for these gardens, there is little incentive for them to move out to farm communities where such supplies and equipment are available only through the generosity of farmer neighbors, if they can be procured at all.

Finally, a number of city relief agencies have found that, due to the lack of vacant buildings in the open country, coupled with the inability of rural welfare agencies to provide relief for destitute urbanites because of the almost bankrupt condition of agriculture, it is cheaper and better for the city relief agencies to provide subsistence gardening projects within or adjacent to the cities rather than to build new houses and provide the facilities for subsistence gardening in more remote areas, the utilization of which would require moving the unemployed out on the land.



## THE MOVEMENT TO THE CITIES DURING 1932

There was a notable slowing up in the migration of persons from farms to cities and towns, the estimates of this movement being 1,011,000 for 1932 and 1,469,000 for 1931. This decline is the most outstanding change in the migration situation compared with the preceding year. The average annual movement to the cities between 1920 and 1929 was 1,944,000, or nearly double the 1932 figure.

Not only has the volume of migration to cities dropped markedly in recent years, but the character of the movement has changed considerably as well. Formerly a very important part of the urbanward flow consisted of farm young folks seeking city jobs. Increased use of farm machinery caused an increasing surplus of workers above the number needed to maintain agricultural production at a constant level. With immigration restricted and city industries, trade, and commerce humming, this surplus from farming communities was readily absorbed.

With increasing unemployment in the cities, however, large numbers of farm young folks who had planned to migrate to the cities in search of employment have been forced to remain on the farm instead. This stopping-up of the long-continued flow of labor from farms to cities has had much to do with the recent gains in farm population caused by the back-to-the-farm movement.

During 1932 a considerably larger proportion of the movement from farms to cities consisted of people leaving foreclosed or tax-delinquent farms, and in some parts of the country of tenants and croppers who could not secure credit for farm operations due to the financial difficulties of their landlords and other credit sources. Some farm families left the farm because of sickness or death of farmer or homemaker. There was probably some decline in the number of farmers retiring and moving to town to live. More of those who retired during 1932 continued to live on the farms they formerly operated, their successors in not a few instances reported to the bureau being sons or sons-in-law who had returned from cities since the beginning of the depression.

## NATURAL INCREASE

The surplus of births over deaths for the farm population was estimated at 468,000 for the year 1932 compared with 442,000 for the year preceding. In 1932 both birth and death rates were a little higher than in 1931, but the birth rate increased a little more rapidly than did the death rate. Both the "blocking-up" of the previous cityward movement of farm young people and the return of other farm-reared folks from cities to farms has caused some predictions that the farm birth rate would rise in the near future. The 1932 increase reported in these estimates is not large enough to offer conclusive evidence on this point. But should the next annual estimate indicate a similar or greater rise in the birth rate, there would be considerable ground for concluding that the average age of the farm population is changing so as to include an appreciably larger proportion of younger adults. Such a trend, were it to become pronounced, would have a significant bearing upon future school enrollments and upon other socio-economic conditions in rural areas.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED IN THESE ESTIMATES

The statistical data used as a basis for making the estimates were furnished by farm families themselves, as has been true since estimates of changes in the number of persons living on farms were first begun. For the changes during 1932, reports were received from 23,578 farmers applying to 81,343 farms. In the South, each "farm" reported by many farmers was in fact a plantation unit, consisting according to the census definition of a farm of several "farms" each operated by a share tenant or cropper. The number of farms in the sample is thus larger than the above figure indicates if the census terminology had been followed by all farmers who sent in schedules. This is three times as large as the samples used in previous years, the larger number this year being gathered in view of the rapidly changing conditions in farm communities under depression conditions. The schedules from the original group of reporters were tabulated separately to note possible differences between them and the group reporting for the first time. The chief difference between the samples was in the movement from farms to cities, which in the new sample was relatively much smaller than for the farmers who had been reporting in previous years. It is believed that much of this difference comes from the fact that the regular sample is a somewhat older group of farmers more likely themselves to move to town or to have young people old enough to go to town. Perhaps the regular group is also somewhat above the newer sample in economic resources and hence a little more likely to have the means to aid their young folks in securing city employment or in starting in business for themselves.

Additional data, including net changes by the major geographic divisions and the movements to and from farms for the period 1920 to date, will be found in the following tables.

Table 1.—MOVEMENTS TO AND FROM FARMS

[Births and deaths not taken into account]

During year	Persons leaving farms for cities	Persons arriving at farms from cities	Net move- ment from farms to cities
1920-----	896, 000	560, 000	336, 000
1921-----	1, 323, 000	759, 000	564, 000
1922-----	2, 252, 000	1, 115, 000	1, 137, 000
1923-----	2, 162, 000	1, 355, 000	807, 000
1924-----	2, 068, 000	1, 581, 000	487, 000
1925-----	2, 038, 000	1, 336, 000	702, 000
1926-----	2, 334, 000	1, 427, 000	907, 000
1927-----	2, 162, 000	1, 705, 000	457, 000
1928-----	2, 120, 000	1, 698, 000	422, 000
1929-----	2, 081, 000	1, 604, 000	477, 000
1930-----	1, 723, 000	1, 740, 000	<sup>1</sup> 17, 000
1931-----	1, 469, 000	1, 683, 000	<sup>1</sup> 214, 000
1932-----	1, 011, 000	1, 544, 000	<sup>1</sup> 533, 000

<sup>1</sup> Net movement from cities to farms, a reversal of the earlier trend.

Table 2.—FARM POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Year	Number	Year	Number
Jan. 1, 1910-----	<sup>1</sup> 32, 076, 960	Jan. 1, 1927-----	30, 281, 000
Jan. 1, 1920-----	<sup>2</sup> 31, 614, 269	Jan. 1, 1928-----	30, 275, 000
Jan. 1, 1921-----	31, 703, 000	Jan. 1, 1929-----	30, 257, 000
Jan. 1, 1922-----	31, 768, 000	Jan. 1, 1930-----	<sup>3</sup> 30, 169, 000
Jan. 1, 1923-----	31, 290, 000	Jan. 1, 1931-----	30, 585, 000
Jan. 1, 1924-----	31, 056, 000	Jan. 1, 1932-----	31, 241, 000
Jan. 1, 1925-----	31, 064, 000	Jan. 1, 1933-----	32, 242, 000
Jan. 1, 1926-----	30, 784, 000		

<sup>1</sup> Estimated, U. S. Bureau of the Census.<sup>2</sup> Enumerated, U. S. Bureau of the Census.<sup>3</sup> Estimated by Bureau of Agricultural Economics, based on Apr. 1, 1930, census enumeration.

Table 3.—RECENT LOSSES AND GAINS IN FARM POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

During period or calendar year	Net loss of farm population <sup>1</sup>	Net gain of farm population <sup>1</sup>
1910-1919-----	<sup>2</sup> 463, 000	-----
1920-----	-----	89, 000
1921-----	-----	65, 000
1922-----	478, 000	-----
1923-----	234, 000	-----
1924-----	-----	8, 000
1925-----	280, 000	-----
1926-----	503, 000	-----
1927-----	6, 000	-----
1928-----	18, 000	-----
1929-----	88, 000	-----
1930-----	-----	416, 000
1931-----	-----	656, 000
1932-----	-----	1, 001, 000

<sup>1</sup> Net loss or gain is determined by adding the estimated number of persons leaving farms for cities to the number of deaths, and subtracting from this sum the number of persons going to farms from cities added to the number of births.<sup>2</sup> Estimated, U. S. Bureau of the Census.

Table 4.—FARM POPULATION JANUARY 1, 1933, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS

Area	Farm population, Jan. 1, 1933, and as percentage of the farm population Jan. 1, 1932	
	Number	Per cent
United States-----	32, 242, 000	103. 2
New England-----	588, 000	103. 0
Middle Atlantic-----	1, 808, 000	103. 8
East North Central-----	4, 822, 000	104. 5
West North Central-----	5, 264, 000	102. 0
South Atlantic-----	6, 212, 000	103. 1
East South Central-----	5, 472, 000	103. 5
West South Central-----	5, 682, 000	103. 3
Mountain-----	1, 186, 000	101. 0
Pacific-----	1, 208, 000	103. 4

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## THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SITUATION

Movement of spring crops was quite heavy by the end of April. Strawberries, early cabbage, and onions, and new potatoes were in good supply and meeting a fair demand. Cantaloupes were beginning to move from Imperial Valley, to supplement the light arrivals from Mexico. A few watermelons were coming from Cuba, and this crop will soon be moving from Florida and California. Reduced plantings of cantaloupes and watermelons may help to improve the marketing situation. Spring lettuce was becoming active in central California; tomatoes were arriving from Florida and other southern areas, besides Mexico. Total output of 28 fruits and vegetables was still lighter than last season at this time, but was averaging close to 2,500 cars per day.

New potatoes were bringing considerably less than last spring, but prices of old potatoes were practically up to the level of a year ago. The season for old-crop onions was closing with jobbing prices only one-eighth those of last spring. New Texas onions were selling in city markets at one-third the level of last season, and cabbage likewise sold relatively low. Strawberries, celery, and tomatoes were far below the 1932 price level. Western lettuce, however, has had an exceptionally favorable marketing period.

## MELON SEASON OPENING—BERRIES STILL ACTIVE

*Apples* moved heavily from storage during March, net withdrawals that month being nearly 40 per cent of the March 1 supplies. Commercial cold-storage holdings on April 1, were 336,000 barrels, 4,471,000 boxes, and 3,203,000 bushel baskets. The total was equivalent to 2,894,000 barrels or 8,682,000 boxes. Holdings were 11 per cent lighter than a year ago but 4 per cent above average. Compared with last season at this time, barreled apples under refrigeration showed a 9 per cent decrease; boxes were 24 per cent lighter than in 1932, and baskets were 17 per cent above last spring's figure.

By late April, shipments of apples were down to the low average of about 100 cars per day, two-thirds coming from the West. Recent output has been one-third lighter than a year ago, and the period of important movement of this fruit will soon be ended. New-crop apples from several States will be on the market by June. Best Baldwins and Spys were returning about \$1 per bushel basket in western New York, with barrels of Ben Davis at \$2. Extra Fancy medium to large Winesaps had strengthened in the Pacific Northwest to 90 cents to \$1 per box. Delicious apples reached top of \$1.50 a box, and then declined slightly. Terminal prices were generally firm to higher.

*Cantaloupes*.—The preliminary report on early cantaloupe acreage showed nearly 36,000 acres in three States, or about 10,000 less than last season. The reduction is practically all in Imperial Valley of California, which reports 35,540 acres, the lowest since 1928. Most of this reduction in Imperial Valley is in the uncovered acreage. Intended plantings of cantaloupes in nine second-early States total 37,000 acres, compared with 47,680 last season. Intermediate acreage in seven States may be only slightly reduced to about 20,000 acres. Movement from Imperial Valley will be quite active by mid-May and should reach a heavy peak by June 10.

*Strawberries*.—Production of strawberries in seven second-early States is forecast at 3,727,000 crates of 24 quarts, or 23 per cent more



than last spring. Most of the gain will be in Tennessee and Virginia. Tennessee expects 1,200,000 crates, or 70 per cent more than last year, and Arkansas may have more than 1,000,000 crates, with nearly 600,000 in Virginia.

The Florida berry season was closing with a high record of 2,050 cars shipped. Louisiana was at its peak during late April, and North Carolina was becoming very active in the East. Although Louisiana began much later than last year, total output of that State to mid-April was three times that of the year before and quality of the fruit also was much better. F. o. b. auction prices declined to around \$1.50 per 24-pint crate at Hammond by April 21, with 65 cars going out each day. Southern California and all the Gulf States were shipping quite actively. Total output from all sections was nearly 100 cars daily. Growers in North Carolina were receiving mostly \$2 to \$4.60 per 32-quart crate on the country auctions. Prices generally were lower than last spring, partly because of much heavier supplies.

#### EARLY ONION CROP SHARPLY REDUCED

*Early onions* in three States are forecast at 2,535,000 bushels, or 48 per cent less than last year, and the lightest crop since 1925. Southern Texas expects 2,295,000 bushels, compared with 4,176,000 last year. Southern California may have only 205,000 bushels, or one-third of last spring's crop, and Louisiana is reduced sharply to 35,000 bushels this season. The Texas crop is expected to show average quality, although a portion was damaged by the February freeze.

F. o. b. prices in southern Texas began at a very satisfactory level, but soon declined sharply to 65 to 75 cents per 50-pound sack of commercial-grade Yellow Bermudas and 80 to 90 cents on Crystal Wax stock. However, these prices were somewhat of an improvement over the lowest point reached about April 14. Returns to shippers were averaging about one-fourth those of April, 1932, when total supplies of onions were scarce. A general jobbing range of 75 cents to \$1.40 prevailed in city markets. Movement of Texas onions had reached 75 cars per day by late April, and the season for storage stock in the North was closing dull and weak. Most of the old onions were originating in Michigan. F. o. b. prices had dropped to 50 cents per bag of 50 pounds, with terminal values correspondingly low. In fact, the f. o. b. level for storage onions was just about one-seventh what it was the year before.

*Lettuce* growers and shippers in Arizona had an exceptionally successful spring season. For quite a while, the cash-track price held around \$3 per crate of best stock and then at \$2.25, and during late April it was still \$1.25. Peak movement of 150 cars per day occurred during mid-April, and the Arizona season was expected to close by the end of the month. Central California was already quite active. While the Arizona spring lettuce crop was reduced to about 1,200,000 crates, parts of California outside Imperial Valley expect an increase to around 2,920,000 crates. The two Carolinas together may have 250,000, compared with 60,000 last season. City jobbing sales were made during late April at \$2.50 to \$4 per crate of four to five dozen of western Iceberg type, after having been considerably higher. The 5-peck hampers of Big Boston lettuce from the Carolinas were selling at 75 cents to \$1.25. North and South Carolina together were shipping 15 carloads each day.

## MORE POTATOES THAN LAST SPRING

*Potatoes* of the early commercial crop in Florida are forecast at 1,871,000 bushels and in the lower valley of Texas 1,030,000 bushels, or a total one-third above that of last year. Condition of early potatoes in 10 Southern States on April 1 was reported to be about 73 per cent of normal, compared with 63 a year ago and 79 per cent the average condition on April 1 during the 7-year period, 1924-1930. Condition of this crop in each of the early States is higher than in 1932, when March freezes caused considerable damage to the earliest plantings. The condition reported this year, however, is below average for every State except Florida.

The late April movement of new potatoes from Florida and Texas together was averaging fully 100 cars a day, or 40 per cent more than last spring. Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and the Carolinas will soon be active. F. o. b. sales of best Spaulding Rose in northern Florida held steady for several weeks at \$3 per barrel, \$1.65 per 100-pound sack, or \$1 per bushel crate. Bliss Triumphs in 50-pound bags had declined in southern Texas to 85 to 90 cents on an f. o. b. basis. Prices were considerably lower than a year ago.

The output of old potatoes was still averaging around 500 cars daily, but was one-fourth lighter than last spring. The most important sources were Maine, the North Central States, and Idaho. The f. o. b. market in northern Maine was rather weak at 50 cents per 100 pounds of sacked Green Mountains, but western New York prices of Round Whites had advanced to 70 to 75 cents. North central shippers were getting approximately 50 cents per 100-pound bag, and last official report of the season on Russet Burbanks in southern Idaho showed a relatively strong cash-track market of 60 to 70 cents, or somewhat more than the Idaho price level a year ago. The Chicago car-lot market on April 21 ranged 70 to 75 cents per 100-pound sack of northern Round Whites, 73 cents on Minnesota Red River Ohios, and \$1.35 to \$1.60 on Idaho Russets.

*Sweetpotatoes* from Maryland or Delaware were jobbing in consuming centers at 65 cents to \$1.25 per bushel basket, with Tennessee Nancy Halls at 45 to 70 cents and Louisiana Porto Ricans at \$1 to \$1.15 per bushel crate. Porto Ricans from North Carolina were selling at 50 to 75 cents per bushel basket. Total shipments were down to a daily average of 25 cars, half of which originated in Tennessee.

## EARLY CABBAGE ACTIVE

*Spring cabbage* movement was averaging somewhat less than last year, but fully 80 cars per day. Main sources during late April were South Carolina and Florida, with Louisiana and Alabama beginning to move considerable volume. Texas was closing with only 3,000 cars shipped, as against 6,225 carloads in 1932. F. o. b. prices held fairly well in the Rio Grande Valley area at \$1.15 to \$1.25 per crate of 80 pounds or \$22.50 to \$25 bulk per ton, but values were about half those of last spring. City jobbing sales of Texas crates ranged \$2 to \$2.50, while the 1½-bushel hampers from South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida brought 75 cents to \$1.65. Alabama stock in 100-pound crates sold at \$2.65 to \$3 in several cities.

*Tomatoes* were coming from Florida at the rate of nearly 100 cars per day, or considerably more than last year at this time. Imports

from Mexico were very active during late April, averaging 30 or more carloads daily, but the Cuban season was ending. Spring crop from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and from California will soon be important. Usual-terms sales in Florida were being made at \$1 to \$2 per lug box, and first official report from southern Texas showed a price level of \$1.75 there.

*Asparagus* season was waning in California and output of that State was down to 60 cars per day. The Carolinas and Georgia were shipping 25 cars daily. Jobbers in terminal markets were paying \$1 to \$2.50 per crate of a dozen bunches of medium to large California stock, and 75 cents to \$2 on receipts from the Southeast.

#### MISCELLANEOUS CROPS

The winter crop of *snap beans* in Florida is forecast at 1,520,000 bushels, but the spring crop may be considerably lower than last year in Florida, or only 945,000 bushels. Reductions also are reported for California and Texas, with a total spring production in the three States of 2,035,000 bushels, compared with 2,456,000 last season.

Parts of California outside of Imperial Valley expect a very heavy crop of some 4,000,000 bushels of *green peas* this spring, or nearly twice as many as last year. Increases also are indicated for Mississippi and South Carolina, the total production in five second-early States being forecast at 4,400,000 bushels.

*Spinach* in eight second-early States may total slightly more than 3,400,000 bushels, compared with 2,151,000 last season. Most of the increase is in Virginia.

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#### THE EGG AND POULTRY MARKET SITUATION

In spite of the development of a relatively unfavorable statistical position, the egg market in April held generally steady to firm. An increase of about 20 per cent in the receipts at the four principal markets during the first three weeks of the month, a moderate decline in consumption compared to a year ago, the apparently light culling of farm laying flocks, and rapidly increasing stocks in storage were factors of weakness in some quarters.

Elements of strength for the spot market particularly were reflected by (1) increased buying due to the Easter and Jewish religious festivals, (2) some speculative demand that refused to be entirely discouraged by the mounting storage stocks, (3) high country costs that caused some receivers to store rather than to accept a loss at prevailing prices when such shipments arrived at the terminal markets, and (4) the probability of currency inflation. This last factor, however, apparently had more effect on future sales than on spot sales, the contract for October delivery at Chicago advancing from 15½ cents on April 1 to 17½ cents on April 25 (the day on which this is written). The prospect of inflation buoyed quotations on spot sales to a certain extent, but here the pressure of heavy current supplies and the overshadowing influence of the large storage stocks kept the spot market on eggs from participating in the sustained advance that



characterized most agricultural products following the President's announcement of a ban on foreign shipments of gold and the implied inflation of our domestic currency.

At the present moment the egg trade is facing a puzzling situation. It is difficult to balance the elements of weakness and strength for a definite conclusion. Regardless of the low retail prices and the drive in some quarters to increase egg consumption, consumers are not buying liberally enough to maintain a healthy situation. No doubt, this reflects the further increase in unemployment and the additional curtailment of consumers' purchasing power. The trade output of the four markets for the first three weeks of April was about 7 per cent below that of the corresponding period last year. This reduction occurred despite the fact that Easter, which always stimulates buying, was in April this year, whereas last year it occurred in March. Lack of buying for current consumption is causing considerable backing up of stocks in storage, for while there are still some speculators who see higher prices for next fall as the result of inflation or otherwise, a large part of the recent increase was brought about by receivers who, being unable to realize country buying costs on some shipments, stored rather than accept an immediate loss.

Total stocks of shell eggs in storage on April 1 amounted to 1,821,000 cases, which were 1,121,000 cases more than were in storage on April 1, last year. April apparently has experienced but little decline in the rate at which eggs have gone into storage since early March, weekly reports on cold-storage holdings of various agricultural commodities in 26 of the most important storage centers indicating that the seasonal increase in stocks of eggs during the first three weeks was about 48 per cent larger than the into-storage movement of a year ago. Most dealers feel that the present storage holdings contain possibilities of danger, although they do not possess so far any particular element of risk should the into-storage movement for the remainder of the season be at a more normal rate. The possibility of an early peak of production and a rapid falling off of production thereafter lends some encouraging support to this belief. Relatively light culling of farm flocks during the past month and continued heavy receipts at both primary and terminal markets do not fully substantiate this possibility. Until the Administration's monetary program is more clearly defined, however, no one will be in a position to make an accurate summary of what may happen in the egg market for the remainder of the present season or next fall.

The dressed-poultry markets showed little change during April, holding steady to firm on most classes with trading moderately active. The steady egg market of the past month apparently has slowed down culling of farm flocks, as the receipts of fowl for April at the four principal markets have been relatively light and quite readily absorbed. Prices were firm on sizes over 3½ pounds with occasional premiums realized on some of the better quality marks. Fowl weighing less than 3½ pounds were in less demand, and in some cases were difficult to move in spite of the light supply. Some increase in the supply of dressed fowl seems probable, as the market for the Jewish holidays was oversupplied with live fowl and the precipitate drop in prices will doubtless bring about a shift in shipments from the live to the dressed market.

Recent trading has developed considerable optimism. Trade output of dressed poultry in the four markets during the first three weeks of April was approximately 18 per cent heavier than during the same three weeks last year. This increased activity attracted considerable

stock from interior storage points, so that the receipts at the four markets during the above mentioned period was about 24 per cent greater than a year earlier. Regardless of this substantial increase in receipts, the reduction of storage stocks at these points was about 10 per cent greater than last year, reflecting the general interest of buyers for current consumption.

The United States Cold-Storage Report showing holdings of frozen poultry on April 1 was even more favorable than had been expected. Approximately 67,195,000 pounds of poultry was reported in storage on that date compared with 74,660,000 pounds on April 1, last year, and 80,450,000 pounds for the 5-year average. Stocks of broilers and miscellaneous classes (unclassified) were considerably less than a year ago, but stocks of fryers, roasters, fowls, and turkeys were somewhat above. Following the release of this report and with the development of currency inflation possibilities, holders of frozen poultry have been inclined to hold their stocks more firmly, particularly on broilers.

Although broiler prices have not advanced under the improved supply situation, neither did they decline in April as they did a year ago when the receipts of live broilers began to increase. They are holding close to last year's prices, even though prices on fryers, roasters, and fowl are from 4 to 6 cents lower than on comparable dates last year. The receipts of "hot-house" broilers in April show some increase but have not kept pace with the demand and prices have advanced about 4 cents per pound. The broiler markets are now beginning to feel the effects of the light late fall and early winter hatchings.

B. H. BENNETT,  
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### THE DAIRY SITUATION

Many people to-day are having difficulty in understanding the dairy situation. They see in the papers that in some sections farmers are receiving barely 1 cent a quart for the milk that is sold in the cities and that in some States farmers are receiving only about 10 cents for the quantity of cream required to make a pound of butter. People have also seen in the papers the reports of the milk strikes and price wars in progress. The dairy situation is so serious in New York and Wisconsin that the State legislatures have taken steps to partially control the price of milk. All of these things show that dairy farmers are feeling the pinch of the depression as they never have before.

Many who have been reading these things can not understand why our figures continue to show that fewer old milk cows than usual are being culled from the herds, that more than the usual number of heifer calves are being saved, that the number of milk cows on farms is between 2 and 3 per cent above the number on hand a year ago and that farmers in most parts of the country are planning to have a few more cows next year than they have now.

These things seem inconsistent but they are not. Dairy farmers have not shut their eyes to the situation. It is true that dairy products are bringing desperately low prices and some dairy farmers are giving up but the decreases these few are making are more than offset by the increases being made by other farmers who are being compelled to give up other kinds of farming because of the low prices being received.



Ordinarily, when dairy products are bringing low prices farmers feed less grain to their milk cows, but these are farmers who can now get little more than marketing costs for the grain that they would like to sell, and they are feeding their cows heavily to convert the surplus grain into cream that will bring in some cash.

Ordinarily, when milk is cheap dairymen feed more milk to calves that are being fattened for veal. But now veal calves bring the farmers only 4 to 6 cents per pound.

Formerly, whenever the price of butterfat was low, farmers in the western edge of the Corn Belt would shift from dairying to beef production, but to-day the price of beef cattle is, relatively, almost as low as the price of butterfat.

Faced by this situation, dairymen are making just about the adjustments one would expect them to make. They are cutting cash expenses wherever there are any cash expenses left to cut. They are buying 10 per cent less feed per cow than at this time last year but they are feeding more home-grown corn, oats, and barley. The total number of pounds of grain which each cow receives per day averages about the same as at this time last year, but the mixtures contain 6 per cent less protein per pound, and less of the grain is ground before being fed.

On the 1st of April, with the nutritive value of the ration reduced and no more feed available in pastures than on the same date last year, milk production per cow averaged between 2 and 3 per cent lower than on the 1st of April last year, the decreased production per cow just about offsetting the increase in the number of milk cows.

As farmers can not afford to pay the high prices being asked for many foods, more milk is being used in farm households and more butter and cheese are being made on the farms. Farmers are also increasing retail sales of milk, cream, and butter wherever that is possible, for retail prices are still relatively high in comparison with wholesale prices. Thus, the price of the cream, as sold for making butter, is only one-third as high as it was four years ago and the price of wholesale milk is only slightly better, while farmers who are retailing milk are securing more than two-thirds as much per quart as they secured four years ago.

Increased retail sale of milk and butter by farmers is reducing the prices paid by consumers but it is cutting into the profits of middlemen. Some creameries have stopped paying dividends. The wages of most milk drivers have been cut. Railroad men stand idle and watch the tank trucks go by. These changes are bringing about a gradual readjustment of the whole dairy industry, but during the period of declining prices the heaviest part of the load has been borne by the dairymen and especially by those selling butterfat. As the tide turns, butterfat producers are likely to be the ones most benefited. Market milk producers may feel the benefit of somewhat higher prices for milk, but many may be pinched by higher prices for grain.

The important thing for dairymen to remember is that while they have not suffered quite as much up to this time as have most other groups of farmers, this is a temporary situation that is being changed by the steady increase in dairy herds. As agricultural conditions improve, the returns of dairymen will depend largely on how quickly they dispose of their surplus cows when rising grain prices eat into profits from feeding.

JOHN B. SHEPARD,  
*Division of Crop and Livestock Estimates.*



## SUMMARY OF DAIRY STATISTICS

[Millions of pounds; 000,000 omitted]

## PRODUCTION

Product	March			January to March, inclusive		
	1933	1932	Per cent change	1933	1932	Per cent change
Creamery butter.....	127	130	-2.8	368	374	-1.7
Cheese.....	34	33	+3.5	95	89	+7.2
Condensed milk.....	15	18	-17.2	42	54	-20.8
Evaporated milk <sup>1</sup> .....	141	120	+17.9	358	316	+13.4
Total milk equivalent.....	3,392	3,409	-0.5	9,671	9,660	+0.1

## APPARENT CONSUMPTION

[Including production, changes in stocks, and net imports or exports]

Creamery butter.....	129	136	-5.4	380	391	-2.8
Cheese.....	44	44	-1.5	124	125	-0.3
Condensed milk.....	16	17	-5.4	50	55	-9.4
Evaporated milk.....	189	131	+44.2	399	334	+19.6
Total milk equivalent.....	3,662	3,680	-0.5	10,351	10,435	-0.8

<sup>1</sup> Case goods only.

T. R. PIRTLE,  
*Division of Dairy and Poultry Products.*

AGRICULTURAL LOANS OUTSTANDING <sup>1</sup>

[Millions of dollars]

Year and month	Farm mortgage loans by—				Federal intermediate-credit bank loans		Seed and crop production loans		
	Federal land banks	Joint-stock land banks	40 life insurance companies	Member banks	To co-operative associations	To financing agencies	Advanced, current	Re-paid, current	Out-standing end of year or month
1926.....	1,078	632	1,588	489	53	40	<sup>2</sup> 2	---	2
1927.....	1,156	667	1,618	478	32	44	---	---	2
1928.....	1,194	605	1,606	444	36	45	---	---	2
1929.....	1,197	585	1,591	388	26	50	6	5	3
1930.....	1,188	553	1,554	387	64	66	5	3	5
1931.....	1,163	530	1,512	359	45	75	54	6	53
1932									
January.....	1,158	525	1,512	---	43	75	---	4	49
June.....	1,139	470	1,467	363	36	80	68	8	109
September.....	1,129	454	1,443	368	19	83	---	7	102
December.....	1,116	<sup>3</sup> 409	1,402	356	10	83	---	12	90
1933									
January.....	1,112	<sup>3</sup> 404	1,394	---	7	81	---	2	88
February.....	1,110	<sup>3</sup> 399	---	---	7	80	---	2	86
March.....	1,107	<sup>3</sup> 395	---	---	6	81	13	1	98

<sup>1</sup> See April, 1932, issue for sources.<sup>2</sup> Total since 1921.<sup>3</sup> Omits \$53,000,000 owed 3 banks in receivership.

DAVID L. WICKENS,  
*Division of Agricultural Finance.*

## PRICES OF FARM PRODUCTS

Estimates of average prices received by producers at local farm markets based on reports to the division of crop and livestock estimates of this bureau. Average of reports covering the United States, weighted according to relative importance of district and State.

Product	5-year average, August, 1909- July, 1914	April average, 1910- 1914	April, 1932	March, 1933	April, 1933
Cotton, per pound.....cents--	12. 4	12. 4	5. 7	6. 1	-----
Corn, per bushel.....do-----	64. 2	63. 4	31. 4	20. 6	-----
Wheat, per bushel.....do-----	88. 4	89. 3	43. 1	34. 5	-----
Hay, per ton.....dollars--	11. 87	12. 16	8. 74	5. 89	-----
Potatoes, per bushel.....cents--	69. 7	68. 8	46. 4	39. 0	-----
Oats, per bushel.....do-----	39. 9	40. 9	22. 8	13. 7	-----
Beef cattle, per 100 pounds -----dollars--	5. 20	5. 50	4. 19	3. 42	-----
Hogs, per 100 pounds.....do-----	7. 24	7. 59	3. 58	3. 22	-----
Eggs, per dozen.....cents--	21. 5	16. 6	10. 2	10. 1	-----
Butter, per pound.....do-----	25. 5	25. 1	21. 9	18. 0	-----
Butterfat, per pound.....do-----	26. 3	25. 9	17. 8	15. 1	-----
Wool, per pound.....do-----	17. 8	18. 0	11. 0	8. 9	-----
Veal calves, per 100 pounds -----dollars--	6. 75	6. 76	5. 04	4. 57	-----
Lambs, per 100 pounds -----dollars--	5. 90	6. 46	5. 13	4. 27	-----
Horses, each.....do-----	142. 00	146. 00	63. 00	64. 00	-----

## COLD-STORAGE SITUATION

[April 1 holdings, shows nearest millions; i. e., 000,000 omitted]

Commodity	5-year average	Year ago	Month ago	Apr. 1, 1933
Apples, total.....barrels--	<sup>1</sup> 2, 786	<sup>1</sup> 3, 243	<sup>1</sup> 4, 748	<sup>1</sup> 2, 894
Frozen and preserved fruits.....pounds--	53	78	64	59
40 per cent cream.....40-quart cans--	-----	<sup>1</sup> 50	<sup>1</sup> 82	<sup>1</sup> 54
Creamery butter.....pounds--	14	9	12	9
American cheese.....do-----	43	42	47	42
Frozen eggs.....do-----	53	69	40	45
Shell eggs.....cases--	<sup>1</sup> 1, 294	<sup>1</sup> 700	<sup>1</sup> 163	<sup>1</sup> 1, 821
Total poultry.....pounds--	80	75	89	67
Total beef.....do-----	67	46	36	34
Total pork.....do-----	862	792	609	610
Lard.....do-----	127	106	58	62
Lamb and mutton, frozen.....do-----	3	1	2	2
Total meats.....do-----	1, 012	906	693	688

<sup>1</sup> 3 ciphers omitted.

## GENERAL TREND OF PRICES AND WAGES

[1910-1914=100]

Year and month	Wholesale prices of all commodities <sup>1</sup>	Industrial wages <sup>2</sup>	Prices paid by farmers for commodities used in—			Farm wages	Taxes <sup>3</sup>
			Living	Production	Living-production		
1910-----	103	-----	98	98	98	97	-----
1911-----	95	-----	100	103	101	97	-----
1912-----	101	-----	101	98	100	101	-----
1913-----	102	-----	100	102	100	104	-----
1914-----	99	-----	102	99	101	101	100
1915-----	102	101	107	103	106	102	102
1916-----	125	114	125	121	123	112	104
1917-----	172	129	148	152	150	140	106
1918-----	192	160	180	176	178	176	118
1919-----	202	185	214	192	205	206	130
1920-----	225	222	227	175	206	239	155
1921-----	142	203	165	142	156	150	217
1922-----	141	197	160	140	152	146	232
1923-----	147	214	161	142	153	166	246
1924-----	143	218	162	143	154	166	249
1925-----	151	223	165	149	159	168	250
1926-----	146	229	164	144	156	171	253
1927-----	139	231	161	144	154	170	258
1928-----	141	232	162	146	156	169	263
1929-----	139	236	160	146	155	170	267
1930-----	126	226	151	140	146	152	266
1931-----	107	207	129	122	126	116	<sup>4</sup> 250
1932-----	95	178	110	108	109	86	<sup>4</sup> 215
March—							
1921-----	150	212	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1922-----	136	193	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1923-----	153	212	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1924-----	144	222	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1925-----	152	224	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1926-----	147	229	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
1927-----	138	234	161	143	154	-----	-----
1928-----	139	233	162	145	155	-----	-----
1929-----	140	239	161	148	156	-----	-----
1930-----	132	235	157	141	151	-----	-----
1931-----	111	219	136	129	134	-----	-----
1932-----	96	189	115	112	114	-----	-----
1932							
September-----	95	177	109	105	107	-----	-----
October-----	94	177	-----	-----	106	84	-----
November-----	93	171	-----	-----	106	-----	-----
December-----	91	170	105	104	105	-----	-----
1933							
January-----	89	164	-----	-----	104	74	-----
February-----	87	164	-----	-----	102	-----	-----
March-----	88	163	-----	-----	101	-----	-----

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Index obtained by dividing the new series 1926=100, by its pre-war average, 1910-1914, 68.5.<sup>2</sup> Average weekly earnings, New York State factories. June, 1914=100.<sup>3</sup> Index of estimate of total taxes paid on all farm property, 1914=100.<sup>4</sup> Preliminary.



## GENERAL TREND OF PRICES AND PURCHASING POWER

[On 5-year base, August, 1909-July, 1914=100]

Year and month	Index numbers of farm prices							Prices paid by farmers for commodities bought <sup>1</sup>	Ratio of prices received to prices paid
	Grains	Fruits and vegetables	Cotton and cotton-seed	Meat animals	Dairy products	Poultry products	All groups		
1910-----	104	91	113	103	100	104	103	98	106
1911-----	96	106	101	87	97	91	95	101	93
1912-----	106	110	87	95	103	101	99	100	99
1913-----	92	92	97	108	100	101	100	100	99
1914-----	103	100	85	112	100	105	102	101	101
1915-----	120	83	78	104	98	103	100	106	95
1916-----	126	123	119	120	102	116	117	123	95
1917-----	217	202	187	173	125	157	176	150	118
1918-----	226	162	245	202	152	185	200	178	112
1919-----	231	189	247	206	173	206	209	205	102
1920-----	231	249	248	173	188	222	205	206	99
1921-----	112	148	101	108	148	161	116	156	75
1922-----	105	152	156	113	134	139	124	152	81
1923-----	114	136	216	106	148	145	135	153	88
1924-----	129	124	211	109	134	147	134	154	87
1925-----	156	160	177	139	137	161	147	159	92
1926-----	129	189	122	146	136	156	136	156	87
1927-----	128	155	128	139	138	141	131	154	85
1928-----	130	146	152	150	140	150	139	156	90
1929-----	121	136	145	156	140	159	138	155	89
1930-----	100	158	102	134	123	126	117	146	80
1931-----	63	98	63	93	94	96	80	126	63
1932-----	44	71	46	63	70	80	57	109	53
April:									
1921----	118	124	76	114	154	114	115	-----	-----
1922----	114	190	135	117	131	110	123	-----	-----
1923----	121	146	222	110	147	117	137	154	89
1924----	113	128	226	106	134	105	130	154	85
1925----	152	146	189	146	132	127	147	160	92
1926----	131	253	135	146	133	133	140	156	90
1927----	119	147	101	143	140	114	125	154	81
1928----	144	179	154	142	139	121	140	156	90
1929----	120	110	152	164	142	127	138	155	89
1930----	110	187	120	146	126	117	127	150	85
1931----	74	120	78	106	99	90	91	132	69
1932----	50	78	46	66	74	60	59	113	53
1932									
September--	41	68	57	67	67	84	59	107	55
October----	36	59	51	60	68	102	56	106	52
November----	34	57	47	57	68	115	54	106	51
December----	33	59	43	52	69	121	52	105	50
1933									
January----	34	59	45	51	68	96	51	104	50
February----	34	57	44	53	62	57	49	102	48
March-----	36	60	48	56	59	54	50	101	50
April-----	47	66	49	57	59	56	53	<sup>2</sup> 100	<sup>2</sup> 53

<sup>1</sup> These index numbers are based on retail prices paid by farmers for commodities used in living and production, reported quarterly for March, June, September, and December. The indexes for other months are straight interpolations between the successive quarterly indexes. <sup>2</sup> Preliminary.